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BY THE SENATE,

February 27th, 1860.

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COMMUNICATION

FROM

THE PRESIDENT

OF THE

MARYLAND STATE COLONIZATION SOCIETY.

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COMMUNICATION.

To the Hon. John B. Brooke,

President of the Senate of Maryland:

SIR: The Board of Managers of the Maryland State Colonization Society, believing that some misapprehension exists as to the management of their affairs during the last two years, and especially in regard to the expenditures supposed to have been made during that period through their agency of the funds heretofore appropriated by the honorable the General Assembly, have instructed me most respectfully to submit for the information of the honorable body over which you preside, the following statement:

It is unnecessary to refer with particularity to the objects and purposes of the Act of December session, 1831, chapter 281, by which an annual appropriation was made of \$10,000 for twenty years, and a Board of State Managers was appointed to carry out the objects of the Act. The reports heretofore made by that board to the honorable the General Assembly have shewn in what manner said appropriation was expended, partly in removing a limited number of free people of color and emancipated slaves to Africa, but mainly in making ample preparation on that coast to receive the great body of that class of persons whenever their condition in this country should lead them to the conclusion that their own interests required their removal thither.

So well satisfied were the successive legislative bodies of the State with the course which had been pursued that not only during all the financial embarrassments and difficulties was this annual appropriation not interfered with, but when it terminated at the end of twenty years by the expiring of the Act of 1831, the General Assembly, by the Act of January session, 1852, chapter 202, renewed the appropriation of \$10,000 per annum for the term of six years. This amount likewise was received by the Board of State Managers, and expended as was shewn by their reports in continuing to carry out the same policy, and in building up and enlarging the

accommodations of the Asylum prepared in Africa to receive any number of emigrants from this country who might be expected to resort to it.

During this term of six years, as well as for many years previously, the disbursements of the State appropriation by the Board of State Managers was made, as was stated in all their reports, through the agency and instrumentality of the Maryland State Colonization Society, of which, by the Act of 1831, they were required to be members.

When the Act of 1852 expired by its own limitation, the last General Assembly, adopting the views of their predecessors and coinciding with them in the propriety of continuing to carry out the policy which had been invariably pursued by the State for the preceding twenty-six years, again renewed the appropriation of \$10,000 per annum for four years longer in a somewhat modified form, by placing absolutely at the disposal of the Board of State Managers the sum of \$5,000 in each year, and restricting them from making any other use of the remaining \$5,000 than to apply it to the actual expenses per capita, at prescribed rates of such emigrants as they might actually send out to Africa. Of this appropriation made by the Act of 1858, not one dollar has yet been drawn by the Board of State Managers from the Treasury for reasons to which I respectfully beg leave briefly to refer.

The great mass of the free colored population of the State have at all times manifested a strong indisposition to remove from their old homes to a distant clime, whatever might be the prospect of bettering their own condition and that of their children by so doing. For a number of years past this indisposition has continued to manifest itself more and more strongly, and those who best know them have been satisfied that the most untiring efforts have been made by those opposed to the scheme of colonization, both white and colored, to foster the prejudices and to add to the fears of all who have from time to time manifested any disposition to emigrate. Many have been persuaded by ignorant or designing persons that if they remain here their condition of social and political inferiority to the white population will in time be ameliorated, and those who have manifested any intention to leave the country, have even been denounced as traitors to their race, because they are told that their deliverance from the evils of which they complain will be due to the expected increase in their aggregate number, and that thus every man who leaves the State retards to that extent the consummation they are taught to look for. The friends of the cause of the colonization on the other hand have always held that the true interests of the free colored people would be best promoted by their removal from all contact with a superior and dominant race, and that even under the circumstances which have long ex-

isted here the African colonies offered to them homes where they could enjoy far greater prospects of happiness and advancement than they could ever hope for in this country; and whilst we have never advocated any attempt to compel them by stringent measures to remove, we have always avowed our belief that the time was rapidly approaching when the growing pressure upon them arising from the increase of the white population and the consequent competition for the means of livelihood would require them to leave the State, whether such departure were hastened by unfriendly legislation or not. In anticipation of such a state of things the Colonization Society has confined its efforts to aiding in the removal of such of the free people of color as it could find willing to emigrate, but chiefly in the preparation and establishment on the coast of Africa of a colony adequate to the reception of as many as may hereafter resort to it. The Society has succeeded in establishing and building up such a colony at Maryland, in Liberia, now a county of the Independent Republic of Liberia.

The officers and managers of the Colonization Society have seen with regret some of the proposed enactments introduced for the consideration of the honorable the General Assembly in reference to the colored population, deeming them to be more stringent and coercive than there is any occasion for adopting. But as they have always considered that it was not within their province to interfere in any manner with the measures of police regulation which the Legislature might be pleased to enact, so at this time they have forborne to offer any expression of their opinion of the measures proposed. They leave this matter where it properly belongs, in the hands of the General Assembly and of its constituents. They beg leave, however, respectfully to pray that one provision of a proposed enactment, especially relating to the Colonization Society may not become a law. It is that which proposes to repeal in part the appropriation made by the Act of 1858, chapter 425. As has already been stated, the Board of State Managers have not during the past two years drawn from the Treasury any part of the sum of \$10,000 which, under the last mentioned law, they were authorized to receive had they required it for the purpose of carrying out the design of the said Act. But I am instructed respectfully to represent to the honorable the General Assembly, that if it is intended that that legislation of the present session is designed to be such as to impose further restrictions on the free people of color residing here. Humanity would seem clearly to dictate that the whole past policy of the State in providing for their comfortable establishment should not, at such a juncture, be departed from. In the name, therefore, of the Maryland State Colonization Society, as well as of all others who feel an in-

terest in the welfare of the free people of color, constituting so large a portion of the inhabitants of the State, I am instructed earnestly to solicit that no change be made in the existing law making the appropriation for colonization. Should the amount not be required for its intended objects, the past course of the Board of State Managers gives a guarantee that it will not be expended, and should it be wanted, and the whole amount of \$10,000 be called for by a largely increased emigration, it is believed that the people of the State will witness with pleasure its expenditures.

I have the honor to be, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

CHARLES HOWARD,

President Maryland State Colonization Society.

BALTIMORE, February 22, 1860.

